

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**FACT CHECK!**

**Work Requirements Increase Hunger and Poverty**

Dear Colleague:

Yesterday, Speaker McCarthy was quoted in the press saying, *“But what work requirements actually do [is] help people get a job. Every data point shows that and it helps people move forward. So the public wants it. Both parties want it. The idea that they want to put us into default because they will not work with [us] on that is ludicrous to me.”*

We wanted to take this opportunity to correct the record.

- 1) **Independent studies have repeatedly shown that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program’s (SNAP) current work requirements do not increase employment or earnings.** What the provisions actually do is cut people off from the meager benefits they need to feed their families.
  - A February, 2023 study entitled *Employed in a SNAP? The Impact of Work Requirements on Program Participation and Labor Supply* found that work requirements in SNAP cause a 53% overall reduction in program participation among adults subject to work requirements, with homeless adults disproportionately kicked off of benefits. Importantly, the paper found these requirements have **no effect on employment!**
  - A June, 2021 research report entitled *The Impact of SNAP Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Time Limit Reinstatement in Nine States* found **no evidence that the ABAWD time limit substantially increases employment!**
  - A February, 2021 article entitled *The Effects of Changing SNAP Work Requirements on the Health and Employment Outcomes of Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents* reported that losing SNAP increases the number of physically unhealthy days by 14%, but **caused no significant change in employment status!**
- 2) Overwhelmingly, Americans have a **positive view of SNAP**, including a majority of Republicans!
  - A recent *Data for Progress* poll found that 66% of people have a favorable view of SNAP, including a majority of Republicans, and 67% of respondents support increasing benefits.
- 3) Rather than helping families to find stable jobs and escape poverty, **work requirements have left many families – especially those with the greatest needs and most in need of help – in deep poverty and without any cash benefits to meet their basic needs.** Work requirements in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program **fail to invest in postsecondary career pathways and work supports**, and instead place

more burdens and blame on parents, grandparents, and other caregivers. An array of previous rigorous evaluations found the following:

- **Cash assistance coupled with supportive services**, such as child care, **help families move out of poverty**.
- **Stable employment** among recipients subject to work requirements proved the **exception, not the norm**.
- The large majority of **individuals** subject to work requirements **remained poor, and some became poorer**.
- **Every \$1 cut in TANF cash assistance from families per year would cost society \$8 per year**.

The bottom line is, despite the rhetoric from Republicans who are eager to take meager benefits away from vulnerable adults, **work requirements don't work**...period.

By expanding work requirements, House Republicans' proposed plan would put one million people at risk of losing food assistance and put one million *children* at-risk of having their families lose income support. This clearly violates the principled stance that President Biden has reiterated time and again to never pass legislation that would increase poverty. It's beyond cruel to use food and cash assistance as bargaining chips for avoiding a catastrophic default. We urge all of our colleagues to oppose new work requirements in our anti-poverty programs.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Rules

Danny K. Davis  
Ranking Member  
House Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support

Jahana Hayes  
Ranking Member  
House Subcommittee on Nutrition,  
Foreign Agriculture & Horticulture

Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress